

*Wm. E.  
Watson*

# The Princeton Seminary Bulletin



*Watson, Charles R*

*Jew and Arab in the Holy Land.*



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# The Princeton Seminary Bulletin

VOL. XXXIX

PRINCETON, N.J., SPRING 1946

No. 4

THE Princeton Seminary Bulletin has been distributed biennially to the alumni and friends of the Seminary since 1907. Through the years many splendid articles and reviews have appeared in its pages, as well as interesting facts regarding the problems and progress of the Seminary.

In order to enlarge the service of the Bulletin it has been decided to publish it three times a year. Beginning with this issue, therefore, it will appear in the Spring, Summer and Fall. The cooperation of the Alumni in making the Bulletin more helpful is requested. Letters, criticisms and suggestions will be welcomed.

Through the years the "Alumni Notes" have contained personal items regarding members of the various classes. It is felt that the alumni should carry the larger share of this burden. At the May Commencement this year it is hoped that each class will appoint a secretary who shall be charged with the responsibility of sending to the Registrar any items that may be of interest.

Since the retirement of Doctor Dulles, who in addition to his duties as Librarian, served as Editor of the Necrological Reports, this issue of the Bulletin has not been published. A report for the intervening years must be made, but in the future a portion of the Fall number of the Bulletin will be devoted to brief biographical sketches of alumni who died during the year.

In this issue of the Bulletin we are happy to present a timely and able address, "The Jew and the Arab in the Holy Land," by Dr. Charles R. Watson.

A second controversial subject treated in the following pages is that of Walt Whitman. To consider him as a preacher's poet would seem incongruous to many; but Doctor Rambo gives us a new appreciation of this towering figure. The paper was originally presented before the Symposium, an organization composed of ministers and laymen in the Princeton area who meet each month to consider the most important books of the day.

Since the last issue of the Bulletin one of the most significant events in the religious world has been the appearance of the long awaited Revised Standard Version of the New Testament. Readers will be interested in the appraisal of this version given by Doctor Metzger.

With the removal of travel restrictions and the return of many from the war, the Seminary is anticipating an unusually large gathering of alumni at the May Commencement. As we look forward to this joyous occasion our happiness is tempered by the remembrance of the fact that there are some who will never be with us. On Monday afternoon we shall gather in Miller Chapel to remember those who gave their all in behalf of God and country. May the remembrance of their devotion and sacrifice stir us to nobler endeavor.

E. H. R.

# JEW AND ARAB IN THE HOLY LAND

CHARLES R. WATSON

IT is well to admit at the outset certain basic difficulties. One is the difficulty of gaining any real advantage in a restudy and restatement of the case. So much has been written already on the subject. If any advantage is to be sought, it will be in the avowed intent of being unprejudiced and detached beyond our predecessors. This is indeed our admitted aim whether the reader or listener admits it or not.

Another difficulty facing us is the difficulty of reaching accuracy in respect to many of the factors involved. For example, how fruitful is Palestine, what population can it carry? Here is W. C. Lowdermilk, Assistant Chief of Soil Conservation Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, who says that under proper circumstances we may add to the present population of 400,000 Jews in Palestine no less than 5,000,000. On the other hand there are those who say that Palestine has now reached or is now very near reaching its saturation point in respect to absorbing safely a high population. Or to take another illustration, both President Truman and Governor Dewey argue for wide open doors to Jewish immigration into Palestine on the ground that there are 200,000 Jews in Poland who want to go there and that the Palestinian climate is warm and comfortable to make possible their escape from the rigorous climate of Poland. Now neither President Truman nor Governor Dewey know anything more than they have been told as to whether 200,000 Jewish Poles would have any desire to leave Poland, nor have they lived comfortably through a winter in Palestine except under such artificial heating as no poverty-stricken Pole could

afford. In spite of these and other difficulties we push on to review this present discussion around which gathers so much of animosity and venom.

At the outset there are certain basic points to be noted by which, if proper and practical significance is given, much that is now in dispute will immediately be cleared up. For one thing we must agree on the use of terms. We need to distinguish sharply between Jew and Zionist and ascribe to each its proper meaning. Many people indeed are under the misapprehension that these terms have identical meaning. This is the opposite of the truth. All Zionists are Jews, but the great majority of Jews are not Zionists in any sense. Zionism is properly applied to those who believe in Jewish nationalism, who regard Judaism as a political idea rather than a religion, who count the Jew as a race, a nation, not a member of a distinctive religion. This carries specifically the belief that Jewish life will not reach its completion until it has in Palestine, established and recognized by other political powers, a Jewish State. We need here to make allowance for a movement that is often identified with Judaism in general, and that is called at times Zionism and indeed sometimes calls itself Zionism, but is to be sharply distinguished from Zionism as just defined. This is the Jewish movement which has endeavored to give expression to an entirely natural desire of Jews to develop old historic interests in Palestine and in Jerusalem and to make it the place in which they may live in quiet and peace. Baron Edmund Rothschild and Moses Montefiore, appalled at the condition of Jews in Europe, particularly in

Russia, in their day, initiated a number of economic and agricultural settlements in Palestine for these impoverished Jews of Europe. These Jewish settlements had in them a love for Palestine, but did not aim in any sense at the modern Zionist proposals to establish a Jewish State in Palestine. The Zionist nationalism of to-day has sought to claim important settlements, but these have had historically nothing to do with Zionism. They represent philanthropy not politics. Zionism then is a political movement and aims at a Jewish State in Palestine. Judaism is a religion content to live anywhere, asking merely as all religions do, that it be given its proper rights.

Following from the foregoing we need to distinguish sharply, lest we be misled by a wrong impression, the distinction between Jews that are pro-Jew and those that are pro-Zionist. Just as Zionists are in the minority, though very vocal and indeed vociferous, so the pro-Zionists convey the impression of being very numerous and indeed the dominant group in Judaism. As a matter of fact the pro-Zionists constitute a subordinate group in Judaism as a whole, although they claim to represent the whole of Judaism and although their influence threatens the future. At present one is uncertain whether they and their supporters are a flash in the pan of Jewish history or represent a new and great departure in the trend of Jewish history.

Another important distinction to be observed in the present-day juncture of all Zionist discussion is between the real Zionist claim and the Jewish refugee question. One of the chief arguments presented by Zionists for a revision of the British Immigration Limitation in the White Paper is the need of caring immediately for 200,000 Polish Jews who face cold weather and starvation in Poland. These have already been referred to in another con-

nection, but here the point is made that these 200,000 Poles and their need have nothing to do with the Zionist problem. It is a Jewish refugee problem rising out of the war situation. It is an Allied problem and must take its place among other Allied problems dealing with that of feeding a starving Europe or the problem of displaced persons. In itself, it is not a direct concern of Palestine whatever, for Palestine was not in the war nor was it a part of the warring nations. We must refuse to allow it to be injected into the discussion even if our President and the Governor of New York State have been swept off their feet by this reported dire need of Polish Jews.

### *The Present Controversy*

With these preliminary remarks we can now address ourselves to the problem of Jew and Arab in the Holy Land.

First of all, let us sharpen our ideas somewhat as to what the present controversy is about. It rages solely around the idea of establishing in Palestine a Jewish State or Government. This excludes two opposite ideas: one is that of Palestine becoming an independent Arab Government; the other is the idea of the Government remaining as today a British Mandate. There are Arab advocates of the country's becoming an independent Arab State, either separately and alone or as a part of a Syrian unit, but this claim is slight for the present, so strong is the Arab feeling that under no circumstances shall Palestine become a Jewish State. The opposition to the land's remaining under a British Mandate is chiefly Zionist which sees in this a permanent defeat of their plea for a Jewish State.

That the establishment of a Zionist State is the sole issue now disturbing the country deeply is abundantly attested both by Jewish actions and by Arab assertions. The violence recently shown, and indeed

displayed for years, in Palestine has been, with one main exception, wholly Zionist, not broadly Jewish. These violent measures have been generally attributed to one or other of the extremist Jewish parties in Palestine and have generally been disowned by the regular Jewish community in Palestine which has not yet committed itself to the Zionist program.

On the Arab side, Abd el Rahman Assam, who is the present General Secretary of the Arab League, openly and publicly declared in Oriental Hall of the American University at Cairo that the Jew who came to Palestine to improve its economic life was welcome but if he came to change the Government of the country he was not. We may therefore conclude that the vital issue in Palestine today is whether within it shall be established a Jewish political State or Government. The future may show a variety of interpretations of this objective, but for the present this is the issue.

To correct a further frequently met misapprehension of the foregoing controversy it is important to observe that Zionism is a dispute of relatively recent times. In his recent book "The Jewish Dilemma" Emil Berger makes us realize that the Zionist dispute is of comparatively recent origin. He also points out that in its beginnings Zionism originally consisted purely of the idea that Jewry called for a nationalistic base anywhere. So completely was the idea of nationalism the only idea present that it was regarded as immaterial where this Jewish State would be established, and the thought was seriously entertained for a while that the Jewish State might be established in Argentina. It was only through the purely practical affinity of Jewish nationalism with Jewish philanthropy which had already made considerable headway under Rothschild or Montefiore or Montague in Palestine and through the perfectly natural superiority of Pal-

tine to the rest of the world for any Jew, that Palestine became in the movement the expected and much publicized seat of the future Jewish State. In his book, Emil Berger credits the origin of the Zionist or Jewish nationalistic idea to books which appeared some 84 years ago, and the really vital and dynamic promotion of the idea to some 50 years ago. First in 1862 appeared a book by Moses Hess entitled *Rome and Jerusalem*. In 1882 Leo Pinsker in Russia advocated Jewish nationhood, probably independently of Hess. Toward the end of the century a third man appeared, Asher Ginsburg, a Ukrainian Jew, who was better known under his pen name Ahad Ha'am. The latter urged that because this idea of Jewish nationalism was a truly new idea, the Jews would require a period of cultivation and education to develop in them loyalty to this new gospel. This illustrates both how recently and slowly the new idea of Jewish nationalism took root. Leadership in the Zionist movement then fell to Theodore Herzl who declared that the Dreyfus trial, in which he had participated in 1894, had made him a Zionist. Until Herzl's death in 1904, the Zionist cause moved in a political atmosphere through his efforts, sought steadily to change religious aspirations into political, tried not unsuccessfully to attach to itself credit for all philanthropic efforts in Palestine, and helped to focus public attention on the political aspects of Zionism. With the death of Herzl, Chaim Weizmann became the Zionist leader. Under his leadership Zionism made numerous gains, some of them quite important, such as E. M. Scott of the *Manchester Guardian*, Louis D. Brandeis of America, Lloyd George of England, and extracted from England in the first World War the Balfour Declaration. The object of this brief review of the Zionist movement serves to remind us that Zionism is not yet 100 years old even as an idea. Its

youth may indicate that it is indeed a mere incident in the long history of the Jews, a flash in the pan, as we have said, but again it can be said that all great movements must have their beginning somewhere and that Zionism may be one of the great developments of Jewish history in the days to come. Whichever our attitude, it is nevertheless well for us to take note of its youth and shortness of life.

Having sketched most superficially the development of Zionism to give evidence of its historical youth, it is worth our while to inquire concerning its aim and object as it seeks to justify itself in history. American nationalism ascribed its origin to a sense of injustice and lack of representation in the taxation processes of the British Government. How does Zionism explain the necessity for the political or national independence of Judaism? Here we must confess to finding very little presented to justify so great a departure from earlier Jewish traditions and ideals. Elmer Berger gives two explanations for the rise of this Jewish nationalism. "Two factors," he says, "combined to bring about this new, unorthodox development in the lives of Jews, neither of them of Jewish origin. The first was the prevailing temper of the times manifested in the rise of great, national states. . . . It was the age when large states grew still larger and when small states, having no outlet for the passion of nationalism, developed the neurosis of frustrated people. Jewish nationalism is a reflection of these general factors. It led some Jews to wish to become a nation, like other nations. . . . Another factor contributed even more to Jewish nationalism. . . . In areas of the world where emancipation had not yet arrived, an increasing and narrow nationalism seemed to isolate the Jew. . . . Exponents of Jewish nationalism overwhelmed by the rush to petty nationalism believed that the solution to their problem

was to be found in the same rush. . . . Discouraged at the slow pace of the emancipation, Jewish nationalism flung itself in the face of the forces of history and said, in effect: 'If emancipation has not been completed yet, it never will. Therefore we will seek freedom by continuing in the role which barbarism and serfdom assigned to us, as a separate, unintegratable group.'" Berger's foregoing explanation really throws the blame for the emergence of Zionism upon their Gentile oppressions. Because persecution of the Jews continued in certain lands in which ordinary citizen rights were not granted to them, they turned to Jewish nationalism and a separate national existence for deliverance. Though Berger does not give these examples, one might adduce them as somewhat parallel movements, as when the Armenians persecuted by the Turks went over to Russia and founded an independent Armenian Province; or where the Poles asked for and gained a separate political State to deliver their culture from the oppressive regimes of Germany, Austria and Russia; or when Americans turned to American independence to deliver themselves from a social and economic oppression on the part of England. The parallelism with these historical illustrations fails in that the people named all became part of the independent kingdom established and themselves developed its life. In the case of Zionism, a river of gold has run from England and America to Palestine to establish its industries and agricultural activities, but so far as our investigations go, the Jewish colonies in Palestine are non-Anglo-Saxon, and whatever Americans and English joined these communities anticipatory of Zionism have for the most part returned to their own countries. Zionism for them may represent a noble idea, but an impractical reality. Berger's claim is that instead of looking to Zionism for deliverance, Jews from

these minority-oppressing countries should have awaited a democratic progress in their own countries in which their Jewish origin would have had no more recognition than other religions and all laws and all privileges could be enjoyed equally by all. In the light of history then, we see no essential connection between Zionism or political Judaism and the deliverance of the Jews from minority oppression, except by the unfortunate Jews themselves going from their several countries to some political Zion in which fairness to Jews has been established. This is not the Zionism of today which does not propose to gather within one political State all Jews, but only to have such a State in existence somewhere on the face of the earth, preferably in Palestine, and make it the symbol if not the influence for the liberation of Judaism. In other words, Zionism as defended today seems to possess no true analogies in history and promises to bear no practical fruit for improving the condition of Jews throughout the world. Furthermore, has not the world passed by the solution of minorities through their separate independent political Statehood? Does it not aim today rather at a State in which all invidious discriminations shall cease? For the Negro in America, for example, does not Zionism suggest his establishing somewhere some independent Negro State? It is not along these lines that America seeks today to solve the Negro problem.

### *Length of Land Tenure*

We now come to the various arguments by which Zionism defends its right to establish itself in Palestine. One is the length of tenure of the land. Later we shall question the entire relevance of this argument, but here we will discuss the facts involved. The Jewish argument is Biblical, and is based on Biblical records.

Back, far back, in the second millennium B.C. was not Palestine given to the Jews by divine promise? In subsequent years was not this promise redeemed by the actual conquest of the land and the establishment there of a Jewish Kingdom? Was not the period of the Exile of some thirty years a mere interlude terminated by the return from the Exile? The final Dispersion of the Jews and the building of an altar to Jupiter on Zion Hill, followed by the building of the Mosque called Omar on the same eminence, are these not mere historical accidents, even if the last events cover some 1900 years of history? Such is the Zionist claim to the historical tenure of Palestine by the Jews.

In opposition is the Arab argument. The Arab identifies himself with the Semitic races that are referred to in Scripture as "Canaanites." These he claims were the original inhabitants and owners of the land for centuries before the Jew appeared. The total period during which the Jewish race occupied the land as an independent nation is limited to some 329 years. And even if a divine offer of Palestine was made to the Jew, he proved unworthy of it and was driven into Exile as a disciplinary measure. Given a second chance in the days of the Maccabees, he again proved unworthy and was dispersed finally as a race until not a single Jew was left in the Holy City. Nineteen hundred years have passed since, in which the land has been held by Arabs and their ancestors, until now when Jews seek to re-establish a forfeited claim, if claim there ever was, no less than nineteen centuries old. Now it is not to be denied that Christians in America have been deeply influenced by these Biblical claims of the Jews, and this is exactly where the Arab complains that America has been responsive to the theory that Palestine belongs to the Jews by some legal right. "Free your-



self," says the Arab, "from the incomplete, partial, and misleading Biblical calendar and look at the history of Palestine through the more correct vision of secular history, and you will see that the argument of the length of tenure of the country lies on the side of the Arab title to this land and not at all on the Jewish side." Baron de Bildt who for years was Swedish Minister to Egypt was asked recently on his return from America whether America was interested in Egypt and the Near East. His answer was "Yes, on two main grounds. The one is archeological; the origin of the human race as portrayed in temples, sphinxes, and pyramids. The other is a Biblical interest. Apart from this interest America is rather ignorant of the Near East." We fear that there is much truth in Baron de Bildt's statement, and the Arab lament is that this affects America's view of Jewish rights to Palestine.

The author wishes, however, to raise here the question as to the force or value of any argument based on length of tenure of a country. If this argument is granted, it has some interesting applications, the most obvious of which is the American claim to America. Should we not by this argument surrender America to the Indians, also Australia to the Aborigines, and New Zealand to the Maories? Indeed what country is there which does not go back to some recent invasion of it by its present inhabitants? The present writer is inclined to accept the world as it is and abandon all attempt at trying to set right, on the basis of abstract principles of justice, what has already occurred. The main point is to apply present-day conceptions of justice to present-day conditions, and go on. He would therefore regard this argument of tenure of Palestine as wholly irrelevant. But if it is to be applied on the basis of actual history, it would seem to lie with the Arabs rather than the Jews.

### *The Balfour Declaration*

The second and perhaps the most quoted and misquoted of arguments having to do with Zionism is the Balfour Declaration. It will be worth while to quote here in full the letter of A. W. James Balfour on November 2, 1917, to Lord Rothschild, for there will be need to refer to it more than once in this study of Zionism. It runs as follows:

Foreign Office

November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rothschild,

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted to, and approved by, the Cabinet.

His Majesty's Government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist federation.

A. W. JAMES BALFOUR

The foregoing Declaration is as noteworthy for the numerous claims that have been crowded under the phrase, "view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people," as it is for the ignoring of the subsequent phrase, "it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine." To deal first with the claims

that have been advanced under the phrase, "view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people," there will be noted the steady increase of Zionist claims submitted under this phrase. To read the story of Jewish claims following November 2, 1917, is to marvel at the uses made of the Balfour Declaration. "A national home" is said to be equivalent to "the national home" as though the only world home of Jewry. "National home" is made the equivalent of "political state," which was abundantly repudiated in several important official declarations. A statement, which as late as in the British Royal Commission's Report of 1937 was defined merely as "a statement of policy" is lifted to the level of a great national pledge of the British Empire. That which had its origin in an utterance of one country only is tacitly accepted today as an international committal to a serious political undertaking. But the greatest commentary on how the Balfour Declaration has been glorified today is in the mildness of the following statement of Weizmann himself when called upon by the Supreme Council of the Peace Conference in Paris to answer the question put by Robert Lansing, as to the exact meaning of the term "a Jewish national home." "Did that mean an autonomous government?" The reply of Weizmann was as follows, "The Zionist Government did not want an autonomous Jewish Government, but merely to establish in Palestine under a mandatory power an administration, not necessarily Jewish, which would render it possible to send into Palestine 70,000 to 80,000 Jews annually." This mild and placating statement, although followed by further claims that appear to deny or go beyond these introductory statements, illustrates the steady advance today in spirit and claims based on the quite inoffensive, really indefinite, utterances of the Balfour Declaration.

To complete the picture we now turn to the second British phrase in the same Declaration, "it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done that may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine." How a Jewish State with political sovereignty could ever come into existence in accordance with these requirements baffles every imagination unless we picture the total displacement or elimination of the Arab in Palestine. With this condition in the Balfour Declaration, it is customary to associate the MacMahon letters to King Hussein. These letters are used by the Arabs to set forth their claim that the British Government at the same time that it was making the Balfour Declaration to the Jews was making a promise to turn all of the great area of Syria and Lebanon and Palestine and the hinterlands of these countries into a vast Arab Empire. The Jewish rebuttal to these claims lies in questioning whether Palestine was included in this great area or not. Antonius in his book records these letters and makes this claim, that Great Britain in her distress in World War I did include the offer of Palestine in the future Arab kingdom of Feisal, son of Hussein. The question seems in doubt and for this reason the letters are not given prominence here. The independence of Greater Syria was the matter most to the front at that time and it may be that for this reason the status of Palestine was not given explicit definition. Furthermore, MacMahon in his letter of July 23, 1937, to the London *Times* declares that it was not his intention to include Palestine in the pledge which he gave to the Emir in those letters. Leaving aside these Arab claims and the MacMahon letters, we may still count as authentic and regard as insurmountable to every Jewish notion of an autonomous sovereign Jewish state in Palestine the added condition of the Bal-

four Declaration, "nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine."

Summing up the argument that can be legitimately derived from the Balfour Declaration, it seems to be a promise for greater freedom to the Jews to settle in Palestine subject to some overruling power such as the British Mandatory Government in which Jews as civilians, together with Arabs and Christians, also as like civilians, would enjoy civil and religious regulations and laws that would be equitable and just. This would meet in the writer's judgment the full meaning of "a national home," but he is not so sanguine about composing practically under any common laws the aspirations of Jew, Arab, and Christian. The feasibility of the proposal however is another question and one to which we now come.

### *Practical Implications*

Hitherto we have been considering a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine from the point of view of the arguments put forth by the Zionist. Let us now consider certain practical implications of the proposal which need to be weighed.

First to be noted is the fact that it proposes a Jewish commonwealth to be set up in the midst of fanatical opposition. The Arab accepts the Jew as a fellow Semite in economic relations and tolerates him as of another religion providing he be subordinate politically. But to have him the dominant race is to the Arab intolerable. Likewise to have the Jew independent and sovereign, set down in the midst of Arab and Moslem countries, has no parallel in history. Yet this Jewish State is often spoken of as forming a natural part of the great Near East. Its future economic success depends on its establishing friendly relations with the sur-

rounding nations to which it should minister economically. We do not see how this fanatical opposition is to be composed even if a Jewish nation be set up in Palestine.

In the second place Palestine is without natural and adequate boundary lines. Some geographical areas have natural defences. England was spared a German invasion in this last war by virtue of its ocean defense of the Channel at its most vulnerable point. Egypt escaped German invasion by virtue of the Great Depression in its Western Desert. But Palestine through the ages has been the highway of wars and of the passage of armies from north to south and from south to north.

In the third place the land is really indivisible as between Arab and Jew. Particularly is this the case at Jerusalem, the sacred city, sacred to the three religions, Christian, Jew, and Arab. And at the moment, the Arab and Islam hold under complete and exclusive dominance both the Temple Area and the whole of Hebron. It is true that the Zionist Agency pledged at San Francisco in 1945, "the preservation of the personal and property rights as well as of the religions, linguistic and cultural rights of the Arab and other non-Jewish population of Palestine." Go to Palestine and see today the economic life of Jerusalem divided between the Moslem Friday, the Jewish Saturday, and the Christian Sunday. Note how Jewish culture in Palestine is today seeking to enthrone the Hebrew language in its schools and great University. Then ask under what arrangement a Jewish commonwealth would be likely to fulfill its promises to the satisfaction of Arab or Christian. Also ask yourself why the Arab should be more likely to trust the impartiality of the Zionist in administering an even-handed government than the British as now or as the Arab if Arab ideals are

